pointing out the moon

by Raedyn L.

Odette loves her father, that is for certain. She does not remember her mother except for a few fleeting glimpses in her memories (a snatch of white-blonde hair, or at least it seemed that way; and there are also flowers she cannot describe wafting in a perfume down to her nose), so her father is closest to her heart

When Rothbart abducts her, drags her kicking and screaming away from the carriage where her father is covered in blood, away to a lake (*the* lake), she spends the first few days wracked with worry that courses through her veins with every pulse.

Is her father alive? What if Rothbart decides to kill her off? When will Derek find her?

What were the last things she said to her father? She is sure that she will die soon...

-

At night Rothbart asks her to marry him. On the first night, she refuses because she is too tired and scared to do anything but shake her head. On the second night it is almost the same; but on the third night she has recovered enough from the shock and declares her answer much more strongly than before. She wants him to know that she will never say yes to him--her heart is still with Derek; it is in fact lodged in Derek's chest like the magic spell Rothbart threw at her father with one hand.

The sorceror storms off in a huff at the answer, noting that she is beginning to stand up for herself, and leaves her alone with her thoughts.

Alone with her thoughts, and with Jean-Bob and Speed.

-

For some peculiar reason Odette can understand them; perhaps it is part of Rothbart's spell, or perhaps it is something else. Or perhaps she is just crazy--she neither knows nor cares about the reason, and finds the two creatures something of a comfort. They often attempt to lighten her mood, and she allows her mood to be lightened accordingly, at least when she is human.

When she sleeps as a swan in the daytime, she often dreams of her father. There are images locked in her mind--the last time she saw him on their way home, the first time she saw him visibly age, and sometimes (just barely) she hears her father's voice and smells that same indescribable scent, the one her mother carried.

Occasionally Odette wakes up at the exact moment she transforms into a human, and it is a jarring experience. She forgets she has wings instead of arms and attempts to throw them over her face, and when she hears them beat furiously she is alarmed.

What's happened to me?

Then she is human again, and things make sense.

It is not always the case: usually, Odette wakes up after a few hours and is often tired, though that is shaken off when she transforms into a human again. Sometimes she sees herself in the water that swirls around her, and sometimes she sees someone else.

The blonde woman in the water is not her, though she has the same hair and build. The woman she sees is wearing a dark dress Odette has never seen before, and she is somewhat older (is that a child in her arms? The water distorts the image so she is not sure--it could be a glare).

However, the woman looks tired, and that is no surprise to Odette. She is always tired now, always fed up with Rothbart's cheap proposals and her own worries.

-
Once Odette is settled into the routine, the days pass by quickly.

She sleeps, she wakes, she transforms--then Rothbart comes.

He proposes, and she refuses.

He leaves in a huff.

Jean-Bob and Speed are around, somewhere. Odette talks to them for a while, if she wants to. She worries about things and keeps them to herself.

And then, the monotony is broken, because Derek finds her and it is the one thing that has changed.

Things go even faster from there--she tells Derek of the curse and how he can break it. He promises he will--he invites her to the ball and she promises to come.

She should have known that going this fast wasn't good--faster speeds will break things even more, and they may not be curses. They may be promises. They may be hearts.

Rothbart appears once Derek is gone, and promptly breaks her heart by pointing out the moon. It is not full, it is a crescent, empty and wan. It is not enough to change her into a human for the ball.

Odette stays on the lake, fragmented and torn, then makes up her mind and goes to the ball as a swan.

Another break in routine.

-
The woman she sees through the window is not her. She is wearing black, and where would she get a black dress? She has been a swan for months now.

There must have been something in the water because Derek is tricked.

Odette feels the moment his vow to her is broken and hurries to the lake, the pale sliver of moonlight barely lighting her way.

Follow me, Derek, I want you to be with me when I die.

She does not want to be a swan when he sees her, and that is why she hurries to the lake.

-
Derek finds her again, and Odette is too weak to do anything. She loses consciousness--everything goes fuzzy, then dark.

-
When she wakes up again (and she is not sure how much time has passed, she must have been asleep, not dying), she is lost in a flurry of emotion. Mostly confusion, but also joy--she is alive after all.

Derek takes her to the castle for the wedding that should have taken place months ago, the wedding Odette was not sure she would have until now.

In honour of her sojourn as a swan, the seamstresses dress her up in a white dress with trim that is reminiscent of feathers--quite elegant and rather clever, but Odette is chilled by it slightly when she looks in the mirror. She does not want to be a swan anymore; and besides, the dress is extremely uncomfortable as the women snip and sew and chatter around her.

-
Odette finds Derek when the fittings are done and the dress is almost finished. She catches sight of him in a hallway and calls to him before he gets out of sight.

"Derek!"

He half-turns, and smiles when he sees her. "Odette--it feels like I haven't seen you in *weeks*!"

They meet and hug, a little bit closer than proper, then Odette pulls away to ask a question she didn't think about till now.

"Derek, where is my father?"

When he answers it, carefully yet awkwardly, she is not sure what happens but Derek is holding her tightly and her face is wet.

The day Rothbart made a lake into her prison, she was sure that she filled it with her tears. She thought that during her wedding preparations she would have no reason to shed any more.

It appears that she was wrong.

Posted on 21 April 2006